Equality of Opportunity and Freedom from Discrimination

MHR Connections

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Commission Implements Intake Pilot Project

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is excited to announce a change to its Intake Process. Previously, anyone wishing to file a complaint would complete an Intake Questionnaire and write a statement of events providing details of the complaint they wished to file. An Intake Officer would then draft the complaint, summarizing the information provided. The Complainant would have the opportunity to review and adjust the complaint before signing it.

Now, to empower Complainants to share their concern in their own words, the Commission is implementing a pilot project which simplifies the process so that Complainants will write their own complaints. Complainants will complete a simplified form that includes setting out the details of their complaint. These documents will form the official complaint which will be shared with the Respondent and serve as the basis for any mediation, investigation or adjudication that will occur. This is similar to the process many other human rights commissions follow in Canada.

In addition to giving Complainants more control in explaining their concerns, it is anticipated that the new process will increase the efficiency of the intake process, allowing Intake Officers to spend more time resolving concerns as well as providing public education. Intake Officers will continue to be available to answer questions about human rights issues and principles, the complaint process, and to answer questions and provide guidance with respect to completing the complaint and related documents.

CASHRA Conference Brief

The Canadian Association of Statutory Human Rights Agencies, an association which The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is a part of, held its annual conference in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan on June 22-23, 2015. In addition to various panels that provided valuable information and insight to attendees, The conference included several keynote speakers, namely Justice Murray Sinclair, Senator Lillian Dyck, Elliot Paus Jenssen and Dr. Ryan Meili. Justice Sinclair provided deep insight into residential schools, including their historical background, as well as discussing aboriginal peoples more broadly in the Canadian context. He was able to take very complex issues and present them simply, succinctly, and with great clarity. Senator Dyck spoke about missing and murdered

continued on page 2

THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

www.manitobahumanrights.ca

The Rights Connection

By Yvonne Peters - Chairperson

Steps Towards Healing

June 2nd marked a monumental turning point in the history of human rights in Canada. On this day the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) issued its report on the devastating impact of residential schools on the rights and culture of Aboriginal people. The residential school system was based on an assumption that European civilization and Christian religions were superior to Aboriginal culture, which was regarded as savage and brutal. Despite these coercive tactics, Aboriginal people managed to maintain a rich, vibrant, and proud way of life. The TRC offers Canada the opportunity to heal and learn from past mistakes and to rebuild a more just and inclusive society. The Commission applauds the TRC for its truth and honesty.

The Manitoba government was the first province to do its part in the healing process. On June 18, 2015 it issued an apology to all Aboriginal Metis and Inuit peoples who were impacted by the 60's scoop – the children who were taken from their families and placed in non-Aboriginal homes and the families who had their children taken.

The City of Winnipeg is also taking positive action. Earlier this year MacLean's magazine named Winnipeg the most racist city in Canada. New Mayor Brian Bowman's immediately called stakeholders together to reflect on this observation. Rather than responding with a string of excuses, commitments were made to create a more respectful and inclusive Winnipeg. A website, One Winnipeg, has been created to facilitate these important discussions, and the Commission looks forward to participating in the One Winnipeg Forum the City is organizing later this year.

All of these initiatives are important steps in the healing process for Canada, and the Commission looks forward to these calls of action to become reality. However, let us not wait for governments to respond. The truth is that as individual people we can all take our own first steps to help with the healing and to create a more respectful, accepting, discrimination free society.

Take the time to read, listen, share, and understand how the blatant disregard for the human rights of Aboriginal people affects the human rights of all of us.

Pembina Trails Human Rights Project: *One School Division One United Cause* – Submitted

After a year of planning and learning focused on human rights, students and staff of the Pembina Trails School Division converged on Investors Group Field. During two days in May, a massive mosaic was created on the field. One by one, 15,000 students and staff placed a panel on the green turf highlighting one right of the child.

"Our collective hope is that our students have become even stronger participants in the discussion that is human rights," shares Art Consultant Cameron Cross. "We also want our students to now reflect back on this whole experience and say to themselves "anything is possible; I can do anything I set my mind to."

In the hopes of inspiring our students long past the event itself, a number of guest speakers shared their own human rights stories. Gale Asper, Michael Champagne, and a survivor of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, Éloge Butera, were just some of the many guests who took center stage.

The innovative project was a first in Canada and was made possible through a partnership with The Canadian Museum For Human Rights, The Winnipeg Blue Bombers, and Investors Group Field.

CASHRA continued from page 1

aboriginal women. She created awareness of how sometimes subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, bias is present when aboriginal issues and statistics are reported. Elliot Paus Jenssen spoke about ageism and provided a reminder that while age might create greater reliance on others, the elderly should be valued provided with the supports they need to continue engaging with society.

Dr. Ryan Meili spoke about health and the importance of looking at the big picture in improving health. He clearly identified socioeconomic issues as being more significant in affecting the overall health of individuals than healthcare services in and of themselves and that tackling those issues as the way to building a healthy society. Overall, the conference provided attendees with a great deal of information as well as many things to think about.

Congratulations to Pat Daniels Manitoba Service Excellence Award Recipient

Intake Officer Pat Daniels (front left) displays her award with Investigator Pam Roberts (front right), Executive Director Azim Jiwa, Manager of Intake and Mediation Tanya Buschau, and Assistant Executive Director George Sarides (back, left to right)

Those who work with Pat Daniels (MHRC Intake Officer) know that her motto is "work smarter, not harder". Pat is quick to share her 20 plus years of experience to provide assistance to the intake team and beyond. Earlier this month, Pat was recognized for her exceptional contributions when she was awarded the Manitoba Service Excellence Award. This award is given annually to a civil servant for high levels of job performance and demonstrated commitment to client service satisfaction.

Her nominators Pam Roberts (Human Rights Investigator) and George Sarides (Assistant Executive Director) noted that the Commission is fortunate to have Pat, an international award winning public speaker, on staff. People across the province have benefited from Pat's presentation abilities in human rights seminars covering complicated legal issues, to presentations at youth conferences that were made relevant, fun and engaging.

Her manager, Tanya Buschau said, "Pat is everything a public servant should be: hardworking, helpful, knowledgeable and extremely efficient. The quality of service she provides to the public is exceptional." She added that, "The work that all of our Intake Officers do is critical to the overall operation of the Commission and can be very challenging in a number of ways. Unfortunately Intake Officers like Pat frequently must have difficult conversations with members of the public who are upset or emotional. Pat handles these challenges with a positive attitude and treats everyone with respect."

Pat's ability to easily adapt to change will be important in the upcoming months as the Commission is implementing the new Intake Pilot Project.

The staff and Board congratulate Pat on her Manitoba Service Excellence Award.